

**Standard 6-3** The student will demonstrate an understanding of the Middle Ages and the emergence of nation-states.

**6-3.6** Explain the contributions that the Byzantine Empire made to the world, including the Justinian Code and the preservation of ancient Greek and Roman learning traditions, architecture, and government. (H, G)

**Taxonomy Level:** B 2 Understand/Conceptual Knowledge

**Previous/future knowledge:**

This is the first time students have been taught about the Byzantine Empire.

In Global Studies, students will explain the influence of Athenian government and philosophy on other civilizations including the importance of Plato's *Republic* and the concepts of participatory government, citizenship, freedom, and justice (GS-1.1). Students will summarize the essential characteristics of Roman civilization and explain their impact today (GS-1.2). Students will also explain the influence of the Byzantine Empire (GS-2.1).

**It is essential for students to know** that it was only the western portion of the Roman Empire that fell to the Germanic invaders. The eastern portion continued for almost 1,000 years as the Byzantine Empire. The center of the Byzantine Empire was the city of Constantinople (originally called Byzantium by the Greeks, today known as Istanbul), which became the greatest city in the western world after the fall of Rome. Constantinople straddled the Bosphorus Strait and was situated on two continents – Europe and Asia. This site was chosen since it was easily defended and served as a crossroads of international trade. It is important for students to understand that, as the western empire fell, Constantinople replaced it as the cultural hearth from which the greatest accomplishments of ancient Greece and Rome were preserved and spread throughout the known world. Improving on these traditions in the law and government, the Byzantine Emperor Justinian organized and simplified the complex Roman legal system to make it more accessible to the average citizen. This codification became known as the Justinian Code. Students should know that the Byzantine Empire supported the education of scholars and government officials so as to better serve the people. Artists of this era enhanced the Roman style of using natural marble for mosaics with brightly colored glass. They decorated and built Christian churches throughout the Empire, including the Hagia Sophia.

**It is not essential for students to know** about the Empress Theodora.

**Assessment guidelines:** In order to measure understanding of the contributions of the Byzantine Empire, appropriate assessments will require the student to **explain** the influence of geography on the Empire's success. It would be suitable for assessments to require students to **compare** the Justinian Code with the codification of law in other cultures (Examples: Code of Hammurabi, Napoleonic Code) or to **explain** the importance of this action for citizens. It would be appropriate for assessments to require students to **identify** and describe features of Greek and/or Roman civilization preserved by the Byzantines and **explain** why this preservation was important.